

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

October 24, 2023

The Honorable Frank Kendall
Secretary of The Air Force (SECAF)
Department of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

Dear Secretary Kendall:

I write to express concern over the Department of the Air Force (DAF) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, (DEI) and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan for calendar year 2023. Throughout Northwest Florida, my constituents have voiced concerns that the DAF has placed an overemphasis on DEI initiatives through numerous policy memos that neglect to mention or prioritize the DAF's core purpose for existence: preserving national security.

Under former President Donald Trump's 2020-21 recruiting policies, the DAF hit its staffing and recruiting goal.¹ Contrast that with last year under the Biden Administration, where the Army, Navy, and Air Force fell short of their recruiting goals.² The DAF is a key contributor to the misapplication of defense priorities, with DEI memoranda that send command signals to recruit a certain number of Americans based on superficial characteristics, like race or sex. According to your memo, the DAF sought to recruit in FY 2022 8.5% black men, 4.5% black females, 6.5% Asian men, and 0.5% Native-American females.³

Diversity and inclusion are an essential part of our society and key to the success of any organization. As such, it is imperative that the composition of our Military Services better reflect our Nation's highly talented, diverse, and eligible population. This memorandum updates Department of the Air Force officer applicant pool goals, broken down by race, ethnicity, and gender. Critically, it also continues our progress toward achieving a force more representative of our Nation, while leveraging that diversity to enhance the Air and Space Force's ability to deter, and if necessary, deny our Nation's competitors.

Diversity & Inclusion Goals*	White (67.5%)	Black / African American (13%)	Asian (10%)	American Indian / Native Alaskan (1.5%)	Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander (1%)	E T H N I C I T Y	Hispanic / Latino (15%)
Male (64%)	43%	8.5%	6.5%	1%	.5%		9.5%
Female (36%)	24.5%	4.5%	3.5%	.5%	.5%		5.5%

* Total diversity & inclusion goals equal 93%; excluding multi-racial category of 7% (4.5% Male/2.5% Female)

Unfortunately, the recruiting numbers would suggest a failure of DEI and social-experimentation programs. Your policies have resulted in numerous recruiting shortfalls of a historic manner; for example, the recruiting numbers from FY 2022⁴ and FY 2023⁵, were some of the weakest recruiting numbers in the history of the DAF. Additionally, the public has

¹ [Entire Air Force hits staffing, recruitment goals for the first time in five years \(airforcetimes.com\)](https://www.airforcetimes.com)

² [The U.S. Army is falling short of its recruitment goals. She has a plan for that](https://www.militarytimes.com)

³ [Officer Source of Commission Applicant Pool Goals memo.pdf \(af.mil\)](https://www.af.mil)

⁴ [Sluggish military recruiting worries Congress \(militarytimes.com\)](https://www.militarytimes.com)

⁵ [Air Force To Miss Recruiting Goal For The First Time In Two Decades | The Daily Caller](https://www.thedailycaller.com)

observed the politicization of the DAF, resulting in waning public sentiment and trust in the military as an institution.⁶ Furthermore, you compound your overemphasis on DEI by creating the DEIA, which stated goal is:⁷

Our mission requires the DAF be representative of the diverse Nation we serve. To maintain the pipeline of All-Volunteer Force, we must leverage the diversity of the United States – including racial and gender, but also regional, cultural, socioeconomic, and philosophical diversity. Our diversity distinguishes our force and provides us with unique advantages on today’s battlefield and the battlefield of the future.

It is quite telling that throughout the 18-page DEIA policy document containing over 5500 words, “combat” is only referenced once, “national security” is referenced zero times, and “merit” or “merit based” is referenced zero times. The document establishes working groups using acronyms for each subcategory of ethnicity:⁸

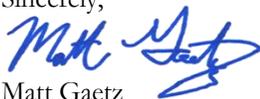


BARRIER ANALYSIS WORKING GROUP	
BEST	Black and African American Employment Strategy Team
DAT	Disability Action Team
HEAT	Hispanic Empowerment & Advancement Team
INET	Indigenous Nations Equality Team
LIT	LGBTQ Initiatives Team
PACT	Pacific Islander/Asian American Community Team
WIT	Women’s Initiatives Team

The working-group analytics team assesses every possible angle DEI could contemplate, except whether an emphasis on DEI could have a negative impact on military recruiting and retention. The failure to even consider this as a possible result in the “wokeification” of the DAF shows a clear disregard for the objective truth.

I respectfully request that your team step back and reflect on the current state of the DAF. With the swearing-in of General C.Q. Brown as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I can only imagine these misguided Air Force policies, ushered in under your tenure, will quickly find “adherence” and “compliance” in the other services, leading to further erosion of their standing and the entire reputation of the Department of Defense (DoD).

Therefore, I am formally requesting that your office eliminate the DEIA working group. Please do not just rely on the standard DoD echo chamber that will reaffirm the status quo. Rather, please take this moment to steer the DAF back toward an America-first outlook that removes the social-experiment element from the DAF and reorients the team toward addressing the threats of our near-peer adversaries.

Sincerely,

Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress

⁶ [Public confidence in scientists and medical scientists has declined over the last year | Pew Research Center](#)

⁷ [DAF Diversity Equity Inclusion and Accessibility Strategic Plan 2023.pdf \(spaceforce.mil\)](#)

⁸ [DAF Diversity Equity Inclusion and Accessibility Strategic Plan 2023.pdf \(spaceforce.mil\)](#)